



June 18, 2003

FACT SHEET: EPA Announces Technical Meeting for Expert Peer Review of Draft Human Health and Exposure Evaluation of the Effects of the World Trade Center

ACTION:

On July 14 and 15, 2003, EPA will hold a peer review meeting in New York City at which the draft report, *Exposure and Human Health Evaluation of Airborne Pollution from the World Trade Center Disaster* (EPA/600/P-02/002A), will be reviewed by an independent panel of scientific experts. The public is invited to observe the meeting and can also register in advance to make brief comments to the panel. A *Federal Register* notice, published June 18, 2003, announced the upcoming meeting and provided information regarding logistics. Further information on attending the meeting and instructions on how to register to make a public comment is available on the Internet at www.versar.com/epa/wtctpeerreview.htm or by calling Ms. Traci Bludis, Versar, Inc. at (703) 750-3000, extension 449.

SUMMARY:

EPA responded immediately to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. The Agency was called upon to bring its technical and scientific expertise to the national emergency. EPA Region 2, which includes the New York City metropolitan area in New York and New Jersey, requested that EPA's Office of Research and Development conduct a human health evaluation of exposure to air pollutants resulting from the WTC disaster. The draft document will now undergo expert scientific review. The draft report has already been subjected to public review and comment and copies of the public comments received have been provided to the expert peer reviewers. Both public review and expert peer review are usual steps that the Agency takes to ensure full and open participation by interested parties, and that its scientific reports conform to highest possible standards of scientific merit. The draft document is available on the Internet at <http://www.epa.gov/ncea/wtc.htm>.

BACKGROUND:

In December 2002, EPA released for public review and comment a draft report that evaluates environmental levels of various air pollutants to which the general public could potentially be exposed as a result of the collapse of the World Trade Center towers. While the primary focus of EPA's draft evaluation is on outdoor levels of various air pollutants outside of Ground Zero itself to which the public could potentially be exposed as a result of the collapse of the towers, some information on indoor and Ground Zero worker (firemen, rescue workers, and others) exposures is summarized in EPA's draft report. These data were evaluated in terms of available health benchmark concentrations and typical background concentrations for New York City or other urban areas. The draft evaluation concludes that, with the exception of those exposed immediately following the collapse and perhaps during the next few days, people in the surrounding community are not likely to suffer from serious long- or short-term health effects. The draft report focuses on particulate matter (PM), metals (lead, chromium and nickel compounds), polychlorinated biphenyls, dioxin-like compounds, asbestos, and volatile organic compounds.

PEER REVIEW MEETING:

The two-day peer review meeting is in New York City on July 14 and 15, 2003, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., eastern daylight time (EDT) each day. The meeting is organized and convened by Versar, Inc., a contractor to the National Center for Environmental Assessment within EPA's Office of Research and Development. The meeting will be held at the Sofitel New York Hotel, 45 West 44th Street, New York, NY 10036; telephone: 212-354-8844. Versar, Inc. will convene and facilitate the meeting. To attend the meeting as an observer, register by July 10, 2003, 5:00 p.m. EDT by visiting www.versar.com/epa/wtcpeerreview.htm or contacting Ms. Traci Bludis, Versar, Inc.; telephone: 703-750-3000, extension 449; facsimile: 703-642-6954; e-mail: bluditra@versar.com. There will be a limited time for oral comments from the public and registration is required. Space is limited, and registration for attendance and oral comments will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY:

The draft document is available via the Internet at <http://www.epa.gov/ncea/wtc.htm>. A limited number of CDs and paper copies are available from: Technical Information Staff (8623D), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Research and Development, National Center for Environmental Assessment, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20460; Telephone: 202-564-3261; Facsimile: 202-565-0050; Email: nceadc.comment@epa.gov.

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